

Billionaire Stephen Deckoff buys Jeffrey Epstein's private islands

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KEY POINTS

An investment firm led by the billionaire Stephen Deckoff has bought two private islands in the U.S Virgin Islands previously owned by the late notorious sex criminal Jeffrey Epstein.

Deckoff, the founder of the private equity firm Black Diamond Capital Management, purchased the two islands for \$60 million.

JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon is due to be deposed in late May for lawsuits accusing the bank of benefiting from sex trafficking by Epstein on his private island.



Little St. James Island, one of the properties of financier Jeffrey Epstein, is seen in an aerial view near Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands July 21, 2019.

Marco Bello / Reuters

An investment firm led by the billionaire Stephen Deckoff has bought two private islands in the [U.S Virgin Islands](#) previously owned by the late notorious sex criminal

[Jeffrey Epstein](#), Deckoff confirmed to CNBC on Wednesday.

[Forbes](#) first reported that Deckoff, the founder of the private equity firm [Black Diamond Capital Management](#), purchased the two islands for \$60 million, less than half of their initial asking price.

One of the islands was used by Epstein to [sexually abuse](#) young [women](#) for years, according to court filings.

“Mr. Deckoff plans to develop a state-of-the-art, five-star, world-class luxury 25-room resort that will help bolster tourism, create jobs, and spur economic development in the region, while respecting and preserving the important environment of the islands,” according to a [press release](#) about the sale.

SD Investments, which is led by Deckoff, announced the purchase.

“A significant portion of the sale proceeds are being paid to the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands under a previously announced settlement agreement between the government and Mr. Epstein’s estate,” the release said.

Epstein’s estate and related entities in November agreed to pay the government of the Virgin Islands more than \$105 million to settle claims of sex trafficking and child exploitation. That deal required the estate to pay the Virgin Islands half of the proceeds of the sale of the islands, Little St. James and Great St. James, and another \$450,000 to address damages on Great St. James, where Epstein had razed the remnants of structures that were hundreds of years old to make room for development.

During a brief phone interview with CNBC, Deckoff confirmed he had bought the islands.

“No comment,” he said when asked about his plans for it.

Deckoff then hung up.

Little St. James covers more than 70 acres, and Great St. James is more than double the size of its neighbor.

The purchase was reported on the same day that CNBC revealed that lawyers for the U.S. Virgin Islands and an accuser of Epstein's [will depose JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon](#) starting on May 26.

The USVI and the anonymous woman accused JPMorgan in civil federal lawsuits of benefiting from Epstein's sex trafficking of young women at his Virgin Islands property. Epstein was for years a customer of JPMorgan Chase, and had millions of dollars in deposits there.

The bank denies the allegations in the lawsuits. But it kept Epstein as a customer until 2013, five years after he pleaded guilty to a Florida state court charge of soliciting sex for money from an underage girl.

Multiple women have said they were raped or sexually assaulted on Little St. James, where Epstein had a mansion. They included Virginia Giuffre, who has alleged she was sexually abused there, and in other locations, by [Prince Andrew](#), the younger brother of King Charles of Great Britain.

Andrew has denied her claim, but in February 2022 agreed to a confidential settlement with Giuffre to end a civil lawsuit against him in U.S. District Court in

Manhattan.

The USVI's lawsuit against JPMorgan notes that Epstein "was a resident of the Virgin Islands and he maintained a residence on Little St. James, which he acquired in 1998 and in 2016 he also purchased Great St. James."

The islands were collectively valued at \$86 million after Epstein's death in August 2019, when the former friend of [Donald Trump](#) and [Bill Clinton](#) committed suicide in a Manhattan jail a month after being arrested on federal child sex trafficking charges.

"The Epstein Enterprise in 1998 acquired Little St. James in the Virgin Islands as the perfect hideaway and haven for trafficking young women and underage girls for sexual servitude, child abuse and sexual assault," the suit says.

"Little St. James is a secluded, private island, nearly two miles from St. Thomas with no other residents," the suit noted. "It can be visited only by private boat or helicopter ... Epstein had easy access to Little St. James from the private airfield on St. Thomas, only 10 minutes away by his private helicopter, but the women and

children he trafficked, abused, and held there were not able to leave without his permission and assistance, as it was too far and dangerous to swim to St. Thomas.”

The lawsuit goes on to say that in 2016, Epstein used a straw purchaser to hide Epstein’s identity and bought Great St. James the nearest island to Little St. James.

“By then, Epstein was a convicted sex offender,” the suit says. “The Epstein Enterprise purchased the island for more than \$20 million because its participants wanted to ensure that the island did not become a base from which others could view their activities or visitors.”

It adds: “By acquiring ownership and control of Great St. James to the exclusion of others, the Epstein Enterprise created additional barriers to prevent those held involuntarily on Little St. James from escaping or obtaining help from others.”

Epstein’s former paramour and longtime procurer Ghislaine Maxwell was sentenced last June to 20 years in prison for recruiting and grooming teenage girls to be sexually abused by Epstein.